

KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR THE AWARD OF MUNICIPAL AND WATERSHED NONCOMPETITIVE GRANTS FROM THE DISTRICT'S SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW

The King Conservation District Assessment (King County Ordinance No. 10981, 12095, 12959, and 14016) approved by the Metropolitan King County Council (November 15, 1993; December 19, 1995; December 15, 1997; and December 15, 2000 respectively) outlines the distribution of noncompetitive grant funds to King County, the incorporated cities participating as District member cities, and the three Watershed Forums. The ordinances require that the funds be used for projects consistent with the purpose of the District as established in RCW 89.08. Additionally, allocations to the Watershed Forums must also be used in accordance with the Regional Funding Principles approved by the Regional Water Quality Committee. The purpose of this document is to establish the policy and procedure by which the noncompetitive grants will be distributed and accounted.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. The District shall notify municipalities and Watershed Forums of the anticipated collection of assessment funds by June 30 of each year.
2. Municipalities and Watershed Forums shall apply to the District for awards in a format prescribed by the District.
3. Natural resource conservation projects developed and proposed by King County, member cities, and the Watershed Forums shall address:
 - a) One or more of the activities/purposes established for conservation districts pursuant to RCW 89.08, as follows
 - i) To conduct surveys, investigations, and research relating to the conservation of renewable natural resources and the preventive and control measures and works of improvement needed, to publish the results of such surveys, investigations, or research, and to disseminate information concerning such preventive and control measures and works of improvement: PROVIDED, That in order to avoid duplication of research activities, no district shall initiate any research program except in cooperation with the government of this state or any of its agencies, or with the United States or any of its agencies;
 - ii) To conduct educational and demonstrational projects on any lands within the district upon obtaining the consent of the occupier of such lands and such necessary rights or interests in such lands as may be required in order to demonstrate by example the means, methods, measures, and works of improvement by which the conservation of renewable natural resources may be carried out;

- iii) To carry out preventative and control measures and works of improvement for the conservation of renewable natural resources, within the district including, but not limited to, engineering operations, methods of cultivation, the growing of vegetation, changes in use of lands, and the measures listed in RCW 89.08.010, on any lands within the district upon obtaining the consent of the occupier of such lands and such necessary rights or interests in such lands as may be required;
 - iv) To prepare and keep current a comprehensive long-range program recommending the conservation of all the renewable natural resources of the district. Such programs shall be directed toward the best use of renewable natural resources and in a manner that will best meet the needs of the district and the state, taking into consideration, where appropriate, such uses as farming, grazing, timber supply, forest, parks, outdoor recreation, potable water supplies for urban and rural areas, water for agriculture, minimal flow, and industrial uses, watershed stabilization, control of soil erosion, retardation of water run-off, flood prevention and control, reservoirs and other water storage, restriction of developments of flood plains, protection of open space and scenery, preservation of natural beauty, protection of fish and wildlife, preservation of wilderness areas and wild rivers, the prevention or reduction of sedimentation and other pollution in rivers and other waters, and such location of highways, schools, housing developments, industries, airports and other facilities and structures as will fit the needs of the state and be consistent with the best uses of the renewable natural resources of the state. The program shall include an inventory of all renewable natural resources in the district, a compilation of current resource needs, projections of future resource requirements, priorities for various resource activities, projected timetables, descriptions of available alternatives, and provisions for coordination with other resource programs, and
- b) one or more of the strategic initiatives set forth in the King Conservation District Strategic Plan as follows
 - i) **Assistance for Agricultural Landowners**
 The King Conservation District will provide local farmers, dairy farmers, and other agricultural landowners and tenants the information, educational programs and technical assistance they need to meet their land use objectives while being good stewards of land and water resources. Action areas will include: Encouraging Sustainable Farm Management Practices, Promoting Natural Habitat Protection and Restoration, and Orchestrating Educational Outreach and Volunteer Opportunities. The District will actively seek public and stakeholder support and public and private funding to sustain these programs.
 - a) *Encouraging Sustainable Farm Management Practices.* The District will deliver general and technical information to the owners and managers of farms through the development of detailed Farm Management Plans. These action plans will give the landowner a detailed assessment and strategy for promoting sustainable agriculture through efficient and environmentally sound land and

resource management practices, including water quality assurance and conservation, manure management, mud management, fencing, pasture management, stable management, and addressing concerns about odors that are the byproducts of agricultural operations.

- b) *Promoting Natural Habitat Protection and Restoration.* The King Conservation District staff will work with citizens, landowners, and businesses in agricultural areas to help protect and restore farmland, forest land, stream, wetlands, and other sensitive natural habitats that threatened by encroachment. It will also review and respond to land use actions, assist landowners in slope stabilization and streambank soil erosion, and help to protect and conserve water resources.
- c) *Orchestrating Educational Outreach and Volunteer Opportunities.* Each of the KCD's agricultural initiatives will include an educational outreach and volunteer component. Individual and group meetings, and informational publications will be developed to promote each project and program with target audiences and the general public. The KCD will also organize volunteers to help with the implementation of many elements of these programs. In addition, the KCD will serve as a referral service, coordinating contacts between landowners who are in need of assistance and other land use and conservation agencies and stakeholders.

ii) **Assistance for Rural and Urban Landowners**

The King Conservation District will provide landowners with information and educational programs to help them be good stewards of land and water resources. Action areas will include: Encouraging Conservation Practices, Promoting Natural Habitat Restoration, and Orchestrating Educational Outreach and Volunteer Opportunities. The District will actively seek public and stakeholder support and public and private funding to sustain these programs.

- a) *Encouraging Conservation Practices.* The responsible use, maintenance and restoration of natural resources in rural and urban settings is an increasingly vital part of county-wide environmental management. The District will deliver general and technical information to rural and urban landowners on land use and water quality management including the restoration and protection of wildlife habitats in rural and urban settings, environmentally sound management practices for yards and gardens, "return to the land" initiatives such as the Pea-patch farming, minimizing land slides and other erosion, and the social context of conservation practices. Target audiences will include: owners of rural residences on non-agricultural acreage, owners of rural residences in planned developments, owners of urban residential lots, and owners of rural and urban light density commercial land.
- b) *Promoting Natural Habitat Restoration.* The King Conservation District will provide information and assistance to landowners, businesses owners, and other citizens in rural and urban areas on

the preservation and restoration of natural habitats including the creation of low-maintenance native plant habitats that conserve water and are friendly to wildlife, eco-landscaping, establishing naturescaping demonstration sites, intrusive species management, and community stewardship.

- c) *Orchestrating Educational Outreach and Volunteer Opportunities.* Each of the KCD's rural and urban initiatives will include an educational outreach and volunteer component. Individual and group meetings, and informational publications will be developed to promote each project and program with target audiences and the general public. The KCD will also organize volunteers to help with the implementation of many elements of these programs. In addition, the KCD will serve as a referral service, coordinating contacts between landowners and stakeholders who are in need of assistance and other land use and conservation agencies.

iii) **Assistance for Municipalities**

The King Conservation District will assist cities within King County by providing a full range of technical experts to assist them in addressing natural resource issues—experts that the cities may not otherwise be able to employ due to budget constraints. Projects will include items such as public involvement in park projects, flood control, stream corridor management, and consumer oriented water quality programs such as drainage and runoff education. The District will actively seek public and stakeholder support and public and private funding to sustain these programs.

iv) **Extending Responsible Stewardship**

The King Conservation District will serve as the coordinating agency or a partner with other agencies as it undertakes several new initiatives to extend its commitment to the preservation, protection and enhancement of water quality and sustainable land use within King County and the Puget Sound region.

- a) *Population Growth and Increased Urbanization.* The district will actively promote workable solutions that help minimize the effects of population growth and increased urbanization on the natural environment (as outlined in Section IV Challenges and Opportunities).
- b) *Conservation Practices Leadership.* The district will play an active leadership role in assessing conservation issues that the county will face in the decade ahead and cooperatively assist stakeholders and other concerned agencies in developing action programs to address those issues (as outlined in Section IV Challenges and Opportunities).
- c) *Support for Regional Conservation Initiatives.* The district will join in regional conservation initiatives, lending its leadership and expertise on issues such as major river flooding, preserving and restoring fish habitat, protecting and restoring water quality in watersheds and general public conservation education programs in the region.

4. Acquisition of real property is permitted for purchase of properties or easements that will protect key features for fish and wildlife habitat and water quality protection (funds are not to be used for active recreation facilities). To the extent possible the properties or easements purchased using the special assessment funds shall have signs indicating that King Conservation District Funds were used in the purchase of property.
5. Project proposals submitted for funding shall be entirely within the District boundaries.
6. Proposals by King County and member cities for natural resource conservation projects shall be reviewed by the legislative authority these jurisdictions.
7. Proposals by Watershed Forums for natural resource conservation projects shall be reviewed and approved by the Forum body.
8. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate community involvement in the grant proposals.
9. The District Board of Supervisors encourages projects that show direct on-the-ground natural resource improvements.
10. Beginning in 1998, up to 90% of the King County Assessor's estimate of Special Assessment funds shall be available for noncompetitive grants by November 30 of the assessment year, with the balance available after January of the following year, provided that such funds have been collected and received by the District.
11. The District Board of Supervisors shall determine whether grant proposals are consistent with RCW 89.08.
12. Upon Completion of the project, the grantee shall submit a summary of expenses and a final report that documents compliance with the awarded project proposal.
13. The expenditures for these projects must be segregated in the jurisdiction's accounting records. These records along with a project file must be maintained by the jurisdiction for three years after the calendar year in which the project is completed.
14. Application for grants shall be submitted using the attached grant application form.
15. Application for grants requesting dispersal of funds by November 30 shall be submitted no later than August 31 of each year.
16. Printed material, audio-visual materials, signs and products produced in association with an awarded project proposal shall acknowledge the King Conservation District as a source of funding for the project.